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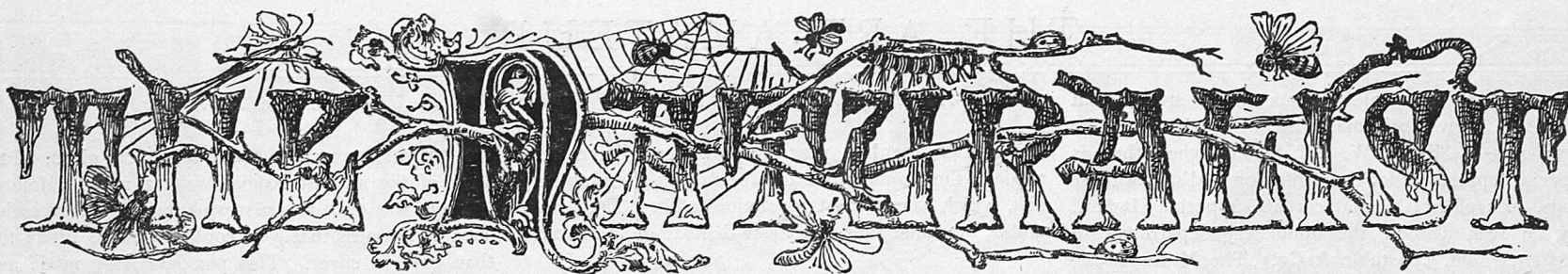
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#### MAKING BOUQUETS.



THE making of hand bouquets is a branch of floral art that is not often attempted by amateurs, and their specimens of such handiwork are usually failures; yet the difficulties to be overcome are not great, and only require some thought and knowledge of the work. The general objections that are made to amateur bouquets are their flat and cabbage-like appearance, the absence of all settled plan in their arrangement, and the undue proportions of coloring and blooms massed together in them. All these defects combine to make a whole (although exactly the same flowers may be used) very different from the even pyramid shape of the florist's bouquets, where each flower takes its proper position and helps to build up and perfect the design.

The clumsy effect of these amateur bouquets arises largely from the number of rich blossoms crammed into them, with the consequent result of a crowd of stems meeting together and forming a massive base. This fault of using three or four flowers, where one would look better, arises from the non-wiring of the blooms, and can only be done away with when the operator will consent to the tedious process of severing from its stem every flower that is to be used and wiring it separately. This will allow the flower to fill its assigned place with elegance, and will do away with the number of stems at the end of the bouquet, as wire stubs are much smaller than any stalk, and when pressed together tightly make a graceful and not a clumsy handle for the flowers. To place the flowers in even rounds is another trouble, and beginners are advised to provide themselves with several circles of wire of different sizes, and, after having arranged the centre flower and its attendant foliage, to slip up the stems one of the rings (the smallest), and to regulate by it the amount of bloom that should surround the centre flower, never allowing any to overlap the guiding circle. When the first circle is removed, follow the same plan with the second, and so on. By this means several perfect rounds of flowers can be obtained with certainty, instead of trusting to the eye to place the same amount of flower on each side of the centre bloom. After a little practice the hand and eye will become so educated that the guiding circles can be dispensed with. The fern fronds and small flowers that are intended to stand out above the other flowers are put into their places when the rest of the bouquet is completed. The pyramid shape of the made bouquets is difficult to imitate, and requires practice. Each flower from the centre is laid in a little lower than the preceding one, but not so low as to make the descending line apparent.

The coloring employed about the bouquet is a matter for careful consideration, and so are the flowers that are best to use for the purpose. It is in the coloring especially that most amateurs err, preferring to use a number of shades of one color, or several colors combined, instead of making up their bouquet of two or three decided tints. There is no doubt that a more artistic arrangement can be given to a flower-stand by employing varieties of shades of one color, rather than using but one tint of that color, provided the arrangement is correctly carried out; but that is not the point desired when making up bouquets to be used only at night. With them effect is the great object, and effect that is combined with simplicity is the secret of success. Such an effect is more easily gained by properly contrasting one or two colors than by using a larger number of shades, which often cause the bouquet to be condemned as an unmeaning mass of color.

Colors at night are different in value from colors by daylight. Pink and scarlet can be used with much more profusion at night than by day, and bouquets composed entirely of one or the other of these colors, mixed with white, are sure to please. White must always be mixed with all other colors, and used in larger proportions than the shades it accompanies, as its predominance is most essential. Yellow, from so closely resembling white, is not much needed, with the exception of the pale shade of yellow seen in the Maréchal Niel roses, and in some orchids; this tint, assuming at night a rich creamy hue, can be employed in a bouquet to the exclusion of white, and will often make a softer combination, especially with deep scarlets or purples, when intense white is sometimes too crude. Mauve is a very soft and pleasing color to use at night, and can be mixed with pinks and white most effectively. It is preferable to blue when a quantity is used, unless the shade of blue is the forget-me-not, which always masses well with either scarlets, crimsons, or pinks. Purple, when not used too fully, is very effective, and contrasts well with orange-hued and creamy-white flowers. Green, whether in leaves or fern, is always used, and it is taken for granted that it is never put in in large quantities, and that the lighter leaves are selected. Each bouquet must be finished off with a circle of green, either ferns or scented geranium leaves; no fading or autumn-tinted leaves are admissible. All should be fresh, bright, sweet-smelling, and suggestive of life and light.

Before commencing to make up the bouquet, the flowers that are to form it should be ranged in heaps round the maker, each shade or variety of flower having its separate place, and all should be wired in readiness. This arrangement will facilitate the work, and allow the maker an opportunity to judge of his colors and their probable effect, and to give more attention to the shape of the bouquet, and the adjustment of the flowers during the process of making up, so that they may be neither too scanty nor overcrowded.

The choicest flowers within reach of the amateur should be obtained, and firm-growing ones should be selected in preference to lighter and more spraying blooms for the general mass of flowers, the smaller and lighter kinds coming in to take away any heaviness of the larger and more compact ones. Roses and camellias are largely employed by florists in the making of these bouquets, but are heavy when used entirely, a centre camellia with lighter flowers round it looking better than when surrounded by its own species, and fringed-edged camellias being lighter to use than the plain-edged ones. Carnations, mignonette, moss-rosebuds, violets, sweet-scented geranium leaves, and all sweet-smelling flowers should be used as much as possible.

When arranging bouquets to be carried by especial persons, they should be made up as to color with reference to the tint of the dress they will go next. Finish with a paper frill, and, if possible, a fall of lace round the edge. This lace should be of the same kind as is used upon the dress, and the ribbon that binds the frill to the bouquet should match the color of the dress. When bouquet-holders are used no ribbon is required.

So small a decoration as a buttonhole bouquet at first sight seems hardly to need any description or any care in putting together, but in reality few arrangements require more thought or repay so well the trouble expended upon them. Taste in the art of grouping different colors and flowers together, and lightness of touch in wiring and arranging them neatly, must be combined in these bouquets. The "buttonholes" that are intended for ladies are larger than those made for gentlemen, and are also allowed a greater range of coloring and more variety of flowers, but in no case should large and heavy blossoms be selected; and if it desired to use any particular sort of flower whose nature is to grow in masses, the only plan to adopt is to cut away more than half the blooms and wire the remaining ones to a stub. The size of the largest flower in the "buttonhole" should not exceed one large azalea bloom, or one carnation, and such flowers as camellias, asters, anemones, and petunias, must be rejected. The only

exception to this rule is when a camellia bud is used. This, when picked from all its leaves, wired together, and mounted with some maidenhair fern and lily of the valley, has a very good effect, but beyond the bud period the camellia must never be used.

Gentlemen's "buttonholes" should be kept as small in the stem as possible, in order to pass easily through the lappel of the coat, and not raise a crease, and the natural stalks should be nearly all broken off, and wire ones fastened to the flowers. The bouquet itself is best kept small, a single moss-rosebud being amply sufficient, or at most one large flower, with a fern frond and a pip of hyacinth, or a bit of forget-me-not or some other small flower of a contrasting or harmonizing color. Two colors and some greenery are all that can be safely admitted.

Before making up either 'ladies' or gentlemen's bouquets, the flowers to be used should be placed in clean water, and left in some cool, dark place for a short time, as, if made up directly after they are taken from the garden or greenhouse, they will fade much quicker than if allowed to gather some moisture into their stems beforehand. Fern fronds and other greenery should be immersed in the water and but slightly shaken before using, as some of the moisture will then cling and help to keep the leaves fresh. No young leaves should be used, or anything grown in a high temperature hot-house. Succulent leaves must be avoided, as they quickly fade. Old rose leaves, mignonette, white alysum, and the foliage of the deutzia and spiræa are useful, as likewise are the field grasses. Fern fronds need not be wired, but should be backed by some stiff leaves, either small camellia or laurel leaf. Rose leaves are better wired, as they are stiff to arrange without; but as a rule the foliage of the bouquet should be left to itself. The prevailing color of the "buttonhole" must depend upon the color of the dress it is to be worn with. Soft shades of pink, mauve, and primrose are in better taste for the larger flowers than decided scarlet, red, white, and blue, though a little of some one of these colors is required to give a tone to the more delicate tinted flowers.

#### FROND COLLECTING.

THE ardent lover of ferns is not always so circumstanced as to be able to collect his favorite plants and establish them alive in a fernery. In such a case the best thing to do is to gather the fronds or leaves and preserve them in a fern portfolio. Of course it is desirable to find the most perfect specimens of the fronds it is intended to preserve, and such a search will require great care and attention. If there be any breakage, any unnatural discoloration of the frond or injury by insects, such a specimen must be rejected. It is essential, too, that a frond to be gathered for preservation should be completely unrolled and unfolded into its most perfect state of growth. When possible, the time for taking the frond should be just before the final ripening of the fructification. If the latter be fully ripe the spore cases will burst in the process of drying, and will not be so interesting as objects of study when transferred to the portfolio. As there are varying periods of the year for the arriving at maturity of the fructification of different ferns, it would not be possible in one tour extending over a limited space to gather all at the same stage. But by collecting throughout the summer and autumn during successive years, whenever the opportunity occurs, a complete collection of fronds, secured at the right season of growth, could be obtained. However, as objects of beauty to the collector, fronds grown to their full size, with or without their fructification, will always be an acquisition to the fern portfolio.

And now as to the manner of collecting and preserving fronds, and the aids to be employed in the process. First of all it must be borne in mind that the object of the collector is to preserve the color and entire form of the frond in a dry state. On starting, therefore, on a